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By His Highneſs:

A PROCLAMATION

PROHIBITING

The Diſturbing of *MINISTERS* and other *CHRISTIANS* in their Aſſemblies and Meetings.

IT having pleaſed the Lord, by the manifold Mercies and Deliverances which he hath wrought in and for theſe Nations of late Years, and the Bleſsings wherewith he hath bleſſed the Endeavors of the Good People thereof, in making them Succeſsful againſt his and their Enemies, to crown Us with this, as not the leaſt Token of his Favor and Good Will to Us, That there is a free and uninterrupted Paſſage of the Goſpel running through the midſt of Us, and Liberty for all to hold forth and profeſs with ſobriety, their Light and Knowledge therein, according as the Lord in his rich Grace and Wiſdom hath diſpenced to every man, and with the ſame Freedom to practice and exerciſe the Faith of the Goſpel, and to lead quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godlineſs and Honeſty, without any Interruption from the Powers God hath ſet over this Commonwealth, nay With all juſt and due Encouragement thereto, and Protection in ſo doing by the ſame; A Mercy that is the Price of much Blood, and till of late years denyed to this Nation, as at this day it continues to be to moſt of the Nations round about Us, and which all that fear God amongſt Us ought duly to conſider and be thankful for in this Day, Wherein God hath ſo graciouſly Viſited and Redeemed his People; His Highneſs, as he reckons it a Duty incumbent upon Him, and ſhall take all poſsible Care to Preſerve and Continue this Freedom and Liberty to all Perſons in this Commonwealth fearing God, though of differing Judgements, by protecting them in the ſober and quiet exerciſe and profeſsion of Religion, and the ſincere Worſhip of God, againſt all ſuch Who ſhall, by impoſing upon the Conſciences of their Brethren, or offering violence to their Perſons, or any other Way, ſeek to hinder them therein; So likewiſe doth He hold himſelf equally obliged to take Care, That, on no pretence Whatſoever, ſuch freedom given ſhould be extended by any beyond thoſe bounds Which the Royal Law of Love and Chriſtian Moderation have ſet us in our Walking one towards another; Or that thereby occaſion ſhould be taken by any to abuſe this Liberty to the diſturbance or diſquiet of any of their Brethren in the ſame free Exerciſe of their Faith and Worſhip, Which himſelf enjoies of his own. And his Highneſs cannot but ſadly lament the woful diſtemper that is fallen upon the Spirits of many profeſsing Religion and the Fear of God in theſe dayes, Who inſtead of a ſuitable return to the Lord our God for this Liberty, and all our other Mercies, and appearing in an anſwerable carriage by a Spirit of tenderneſs and forbearance one towards another, and provoking one another to Love and good Works, are found in a Spirit of bitterneſs towards their Brethren, biting and devouring, hateful and hating one another, and whileſt they pretend the Liberty which Chriſt hath purchaſed for his People, do openly and avowedly, by rude and unchriſtian Practices, diſturb both the Publique and Private meetings for preaching the Word, and other Religious Exerciſes, and vilifie, oppoſe, and interrupt the Publique Preachers in their Miniſtery, whereby the Liberty of the Goſpel, the profeſsion of Religion, and the Name of God, is much diſhonoured and abuſed, and the Spirits of all good men much grieved. His Highneſs therefore, having had many informations from divers parts of this Commonwealth of ſuch Practices by divers men lately riſen up under the names of Quakers, Ranters, and others, Who do daily both reproach and diſturb the Aſſemblies and Congregations of Chriſtians, in their Publique and Private Meetings, and interrupt the Preachers in diſpenſing the Word, and others in their Worſhip, contrary to juſt Liberty, and to the diſturbance of the Publique Peace, Doth hold himſelf obliged by his Truſt to Declare His diſlike of all ſuch Practices, as being contrary to the juſt Freedome and Liberties of the People, which by the Laws and Government of this Commonwealth they ought to be Protected in; And doth hereby ſtrictly Require and Command all Perſons whatſoever, That they forbear henceforth all ſuch irregular and diſorderly Practices. And if in Contempt hereof, any Perſons ſhall preſume to offend as aforeſaid, We ſhall eſteem them as Diſturbers of the Civil Peace, and ſhall expect, and do require all Officers and Miniſters of Juſtice to proceed againſt them accordingly. Given at *White-Hall* the 15. day of *February* 1654.

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